

## SOUTHWEST AREA PLAN VISION



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The rural character of the South Valley emerged as one of the prevalent themes throughout the development of the revised Southwest Area Plan. Residents also realized that the South Valley is changing as new people move into the area; they want growth planned to maintain a less intense life-style and, at the same time, allow economic opportunities for landowners and residents. The Southwest Area Plan is a plan for the people of the area. It is intended to address those goals and issues which residents and landowners articulated, while providing a positive influence on the metropolitan area as a whole. This will be achieved through planned, phased growth and wise investment in appropriate public infrastructure, and recognition and emphasis on the area's historic, physical, cultural resources.

A shallow water table in the South Valley and highly erodible, porous soils on the mesa slopes have played a major role in the development of land use, transportation and drainage policies. Groundwater presently contains contamination from various sources, which raises public health and safety concerns. The erodible, porous soils on the mesa slopes west of Coors Boulevard require special treatment before, during and after development to keep them in place and prevent large amounts of soil deposition from occurring in the area just west of Coors Boulevard. The plan also mandates limited, controlled development of the mesa escarpment and slopes west of Coors Boulevard to help stabilize the fragile soils. Soil erosion structures built in harmony with the environment also are important to soil stabilization and protection of the lower lying areas.

Residential densities in the plan include a maximum of one dwelling unit per net acre in the valley generally south of a line drawn westward along existing lot lines from the Rio Grande parallel to the beginning of the Los Padillas Drain to Coors Boulevard, east of the Gun Club Lateral, west of Second Street, and north of the Isleta Pueblo; and south of Pajarito Road and west of 118<sup>th</sup> Street south of Rio Bravo Boulevard on the mesa slopes. Limited, lower density is also proposed for the upper mesa slopes north of Pajarito Road to protect the fragile environment.

Densities up to three dwelling units per net acre are proposed for the mesa slopes east of the area just described, north of Rio Bravo Boulevard and south of Central Avenue. Similar densities are proposed south of Bridge Boulevard, east of the Arenal Main Canal and Coors Boulevard, north of a line drawn westward along existing lot lines from the Los Padillas Drain to Coors Boulevard; and west of the Rio Grande.

Densities up to six dwelling units per net acre are proposed for the area bounded by Rio Bravo on the north, 118<sup>th</sup> Street on the west, Pajarito Road on the south, and the Gun Club Lateral on the east. Densities up to nine dwelling units per acre are proposed for the area south of Central Avenue, east of 118<sup>th</sup> Street, north of Rio Bravo Boulevard and west of the Arenal Main Canal. The South Valley north of Bridge Boulevard is also included in this area.

Planned communities, as defined in the Planned Communities Criteria, which would contain a mix of land uses and provide their own infrastructure, are proposed within the time frame of the plan for the Southwest Mesa. The costs of extending municipal services and infrastructure and the desire to maintain orderly, planned growth out from the existing urban service area provide the basis for proposing these semi-self sufficient communities.

Appropriately scaled and planned regional commercial and office uses are generally encouraged for the future near Rio Bravo and Paseo del Volcan. Neighborhood commercial and office uses are appropriate in the historic village centers. Additional strip commercial and spot zones are discouraged.

A major light industrial corridor with office and commercial uses is planned generally east of Second Street, south of Woodward Road, and west of Interstate 25. A sector development plan for the area is an important element for the realization of appropriately scaled mixed-use development in this area. Such development should not threaten the rural character of the portion of the Plan area generally west of Second Street. Water quality, roadway access, appropriate zoning, open space trails and protection for existing residential uses are specific issues to be addressed in the sector plan.

This corridor, as well as an additional area on the Southwest Mesa near I-40 and Paseo del Volcan, are intended to provide major employment for Plan area residents and to help minimize the need for future river crossings that may result from a concentration of primary employment in only one portion of the plan area. Both of these areas feature close access to major transportation facilities.

Open space is a key element in the Southwest Area Plan. The Plan area as it exists today is attractive to residents of the metropolitan area because of the many acres of open mesa areas, and cultivated farmland. As compatible development takes place a process for implementing and maintaining, designated public open space will become more important. The plan proposes an extensive network of recreational trails linking the mesa top to the river bosque; the village centers to each other; the eastern industrial corridor to the bosque; and the more urban portion of the plan area to the southern, more rural portion. The plan also proposes to maintain the panoramic views from the eastern edge of the mesa with a permanent public easement for trails and scenic overlook parks. (See map on preceding page)

Village centers are planned to recognize and enhance the rich historic and cultural heritage of the South Valley. The five historic village centers in the plan are located where past and/or present residents settled and socially gathered. The plan proposes that a village center plan for each center be developed by neighborhood planning task forces assisted by County planning staff. The centers would include neighborhood scale commercial and office uses, public services, residential uses, a village park or plaza, pedestrian-scale uses, and restored historic buildings. Visual, written and oral histories of the areas would be an integral part of each center.

The Southwest Area Plan is consistent with the goals of the Middle Rio Grande Council of Government's (MRGCOG) recently adopted Focus 2050 Regional Plan. The Focus 2050 Plan attempts to balance housing and job growth, preserve open space and agriculture, stem sprawl and improve transportation. The MRGCOG balanced communities plan attempts to reduce commuting, traffic congestion and air pollution by stemming sprawl and creating a more compact plan area that puts jobs and housing closer together. This approach is distinct from the trend scenario evaluated in the MRGCOG study, which depicts a drastic decline in the amount of agricultural land in the valley and a significant increase in residential housing on the Southwest Mesa.

The policies of the Southwest Area Plan are designed to promote a vision that implements and makes explicit the goals and policies of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan within the area of its jurisdiction. It is also consistent with the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments Balanced Communities Plan.